

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6547

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

UNCLAS PRETORIA 0025

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SF, PINT

SUBJ: GLOOMY FORECASTS FOR NEW YEAR

1. SUMMARY: SPEECHES MARKING NEW YEAR PREDICTED TIMES OF POLITICAL CRISIS AND ECONOMIC HARDSHIP. VORSTER WARNED THAT WEST HAS LOST ITS WILL TO OPPOSE COMMUNISM, AND THAT SOUTH AFRICA STOOD ALONE. MIN DEF BOTHA SAID SA HAD POSSIBLY TRIED TOO HARD TO SUPPORT WEST AND SHOULD NOW BE MORE INDEPENDENT. CHIEF BUTHELIZI SAID SAG BLINDNESS TO ROOT CAUSES OF 1976 RIOTING BODED ILL FOR 1977. END SUMMARY.

IN NEW YEAR'S EVE TELEVISION ADDRESS, PRIME MINISTER VORSTER HARDLY REFERRED TO 1976 UNREST IN TELLING NATION THAT 1977 WOULD BE DIFFICULT YEAR. (FULL TEXT WILL BE SENT DEPT WHEN TRANSLATION COMPLETED.) SAYING THAT " WEAK- UNCLASSIFIED

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WILLED AND HIGHLY TECHNOCRATIC FREE WORLD" SEEMED TO HAVE NO STRATEGY TO CONTAIN COMMUNISM EXCEPT APPEASEMENT OF THIRD WORLD, VORSTER WARNED "IF COMMUNIST ONSLAUGHT WOULD BE MADE AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA, SA WILL HAVE TO FACE IT ALONE... CERTAIN COUNTRIES WHO PROFESS TO BE ANTI-COMMUNIST WILL EVEN REFUSE TO SELL ARMS TO SA TO BEAT OFF THE ATTACK." PM SAID UN HAD GIVEN GREEN LIGHT TO TERRORISM, AND

WEST SEEMED TO HAVE DECIDED ONLY WAY TO WEAN THIRD WORLD FROM COMMUNISM WAS TO GRANT ITS EVERY WISH. REGARDING SOVIETS, VORSTER OBSERVED " THEY KNOW THAT, ON THE ANGOLA PATTERN, THEY CAN ATTACK ANY COUNTRY IN ANY PART OF AFRICA, INCLUDING SOUTHERN AFRICA, JUST AS THEY DID IN HUNGARY, AND THAT VOICES WILL BE RAISED IN PROTEST, AND PERHAPS EVEN THREATS WILL BE MADE, BUT NOTHING ELSE WILL BE DONE ABOUT IT."

3. NOTING THAT ECONOMIC SITUATION HAD BEEN AFFECTED BY ATTITUDES OF INVESTORS, PRIME MINISTER SAID THERE WAS NO DOUBT THAT OUTBREAKS OF VIOLENCE IN SOWETO, ATHLONE AND LANGA HAS HARMED SOUTH AFRICA'S IMAGE. BUT VORSTER DID NOT WANT TO PRE-JUDGE ISSUES (UNDER CONSIDERATION BY CILLIE COMMISSION) EXCEPT TO SAY LOSS OF LIVES AND DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY DID NO ONE ANY GOOD, AND MUST BE DEPLORED.

4. VORSTER HAILED TRANSKEI INDEPENDENCE, AND WISHED BOPHUTHATSWANA, WHICH HAS OPTED FOR INDEPENDENCE BY OCTOBER 1977, WELL FOR THE FUTURE. REGARDING BORDER TROUBLES WITH LESOTHO, PM OBSERVED " DEBATE HAS PROVED CONCLUSIVELY THAT AS FAR AS SOUTH AFRICA IS CONCERNED, YOU CAN PASS OFF LIES AS FACTS WITHOUT ANY FEAR THAT IT WILL BE INVESTIGATED OR THAT IT WILL BE QUERIED EVEN BY WESTERN WORLD COUNTRIES WHO SHOULD KNOW AND INDEED DO KNOW THE FACTS."

5. VORSTER ADDRESSED INDIANS, COLOREDS AND BANTU IN SEPARATE MESSAGES. HE TOLD INDIANS THAT MEETINGS OF JOINT CABINET COUNCIL HAD GONE WELL AND WOULD BENEFIT INDIAN COMMUNITY. " WITH UNCLASSIFIED

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THIS STEP I HAVE FULFILLED MY UNDERTAKING TO GIVE INDIANS A SHARE IN THE DECISION- MAKING PROCESSES AT ALL LEVELS, TOGETHER WITH THE RUNNING OF THEIR OWN AFFAIRS IN THEIR COUNCIL, WHICH WILL BE A WHOLLY ELECTED BODY AFTER THE NEXT ELECTION IN THE COURSE OF THIS COMING YEAR." PM URGES BLACKS TO AVOID SEEKING VIOLENT SOLUTIONS. HE SAID ALL DOORS ARE OPEN TO DEAL WITH PROBLEMS. TERMING IT UNFORTUNATE THAT POLICE HAD BEEN OBLIGED TO ACT TO AVOID GREATER LOSS OF LIFE AND DAMAGE TO PROPERTY, VORSTER ADDED "I HOPE THESE ACTIONS WILL NOT BE REPEATED, AND THAT NOBODY WILL LEND HIS EARS TO AGITATORS, AND THAT THINKING, GROWN-UP PEOPLE WILL NOT ALLOW YOUNG INTIMIDATORS AND UNSCRUPULOUS TROUBLE SEEKERS TO LEAD THEM UP THE GARDEN PATH." PM TOLD COLORED THAT THEY HAD LOST GOOD DEAL OF GOODWILL AS CONSEQUENCE OF UNREST IN WESTERN CAPE, WHICH HAD PROFITED NO ONE. ON OTHER HAND, HE SAID ESTABLISHMENT OF CABINET COUNCIL AND APPOINTMENTS OF COLOREDS (AS WELL AS INDIANS) TO VARIOUS STATUTORY BODIES HAD ESTABLISHED THE CO-DECISION RIGHTS OF THE COLOREDS.

6. MINISTER OF DEFENCE P.W. BOTHA SAID PERHAPS SA HAD TRIED TOO HARD TO ASSURE WEST OF ITS SUPPORT. IT MIGHT BE WORTH THE TROUBLE TO TRAVE ITS OWN PATH TOWARD SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND SELF-RESPECT. BOTHA HAILED THE NATIONAL PARTY AS THE POLITICAL INSTRUMENT CREATING TRUST AND STABILITY. THE NATIONAL PARTY IS FIGHTING ON BEHALF OF SA FOR JUSTIFIABLE PRINCIPLES OF FREEDOM AND A RESPECTABLE BODY POLITIC WHEREBY IT CAN HELP ALL THE COUNTRY'S PEOPLES DEVELOP ALONG THE ROAD OF CIVILIZED STANDARDS AND SELF-DETERMINATION. MINORITY SURVIVAL WEIGHS HEAVILY UPON US." BOTHA SAID THERE WAS TOTAL ATTACK BEING PREPARED AGAINST SOUTHERN AND SOUTH AFRICA. "WE CAN DO NOTHING TO TURN THE HUNGRY BEAST OF MARXISM TO PEACEFUL INTENTION REGARDING US. WE CAN DO NOTHING ABOUT THE DEMANDS MADE ON US BY THE WEAK CONCESSION POLITICS OF WASHINGTON OR MOSCOW."

7. ZULU CHIEF GATSHA BUTHELIZI THOUGHT ONLY A MIRACLE COULD
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PREVENT MORE VIOLENT CONFRONTATIONS DURING 1977. THE GOVERNMENT'S MIS-READING OF THE CAUSES OF 1976 OUTBREAKS, AND BLINDNESS OF WHITE POPULATION, BODED ILL FOR COUNTRY. "THERE IS NO INTENTION TO SEEK A POLITICAL DISPENSATION ACCEPTABLE TO MOST PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY", BUTHELIZI OBSERVED. WHITES SEEMED TO FEEL THAT TRANSKEI INDEPENDENCE HAD BEEN A SUCCESS, AND THAT THIS ROAD, COUPLED WITH PRETORIA'S ARSENAL, AND THE CALL TO ARMS BY MINISTER OF DEFENCE, WERE THE ANSWER TO PROBLEMS. " THE AMAZING THING IS THAT AS REASONABLE PEOPLE, WHITES EXPECT EVEN BLACKS TO DIE WITH THEM IN DEFENCE OF APARTHEID AND A SYSTEM WHICH HAS COST HUNDREDS OF BLACK LIVES THIS YEAR." BUTHELIZI EXPECTED SAG TO PROMOTE DIVISIONS IN BLACK COMMUNITY MORE STRONGLY IN 1977, AND THOUGHT THAT WHITE CALLOUSNESS TOWARD BLACK LIVES WOULD LEAD TO WILLINGNESS TO SHOOT IT OUT WITH DESPERATE BLACKS ATTEMPTING VIOLENT CONFRONTATION. BUTHELIZI SAID NOTHING LESS THAN PARTICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING COULD ENSURE LASTING PEACE IN SOUTH AFRICA. BUT PRESENT ATTITUDES PLUS ECONOMIC PRESSURES AND MOUNTING BLACK UNEMPLOYMENT MIGHT SERVE AS THE MATCH TO IGNITE THE FUTURE.
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